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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between father condition (absence or presence) and gender identity of seventy-four 5 to 7 year old black children as revealed through their human figure drawings. The essence of this study was to determine if the absence or presence of the father was associated with reversed identification in father-absent children as opposed to sex appropriate identification among father present children. The main hypothesis of the study was that there would be a significant relationship between father condition and sex of drawings produced by black father absent and father present children. The related questions were also formulated: (1) Does the sex of the child have any effect upon the labelling of the figure drawn? and (2) Does the child label the drawing, in terms of sex, according to the way it was labeled by independent judges? Statistical analysis included a chi-square 2X2 test of independence done for the hypothesis and each research question. The results revealed very little agreement between the children's labels and those of the initial judge. Further results indicated that father presence was associated with sex appropriate identification in terms of labels and that father absence was not related to such identification. (Author/AM)

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GENDER IDENTITY AS SEEN IN DRAWINGS OF FATHER-ABSENT AND FATHER-PRESENT 5-TO-7-YEAR OLD BLACK CHILDREN

by Sandra K. Patterson

The high incidence of fatherless homes in America has caused quite a bit of attention in recent years.[1] Because this situation is said to be intensified among blacks and among the lower class, studies that emphasize this subject population are in great need.[2] Along these same lines, in a study emphasizing sex appropriate identity, it was theorized that a predominance of female drawings by male children suggests some conflict in the identity of those children.[3] This particular theory and others similar to it have suceeded in prompting further research in this area.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between father condition(absence or presence) and gender identity of 5-to-7-year old black children as revealed through their human figure drawings. The essence of this study was to determine if the absence or presence of the father was associated with reversed identification (in FA children) as opposed to sex appropriate identification (among FF children).

The main hypothesis in this study was that there would be a significant relationship between father condition and sex of drawings produced by a group of black father-absent and father-present children. Two related questions were also formulated. They were: (1) Does the sex of the child have any effect upon the labelling of the figure drawn? (2) Does the child label the drawing, in terms of sex, according to the way it was labelled by independent judges?

In this investigation it was assumed that (1) the instructions given the subjects by their teachers were given as directed by the investigator; (2) the information given the investigator concerning the background of the subjects and other pertinent data were correct; and (3) gender identity was indeed defined by the sex of the figure drawn and labelled by the subject.

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The major importance of this study lies in the need for further research in the area of father-absence. The present study dealt with the absence of the father and its relationship to the child's gender identity. With so much emphasis being placed upon appropriate gender acceptance, studies of this nature fill a great need. Another contribution of this study is that it examined a female subject group as well as a male group, which is not a common feature of many studies in the literature. In addition, the subjects themselves provided the data.

Subjects in this study were 74 first-graders and day care center students. Subjects from the day care centers ranged in age from five to six years while the first-graders were from six to seven years. There were 37 males and 37 females differing in father condition. There were 49 children from father-absent homes (23 males and 26 females). Father-present subjects included 11 females and 14 males. The day care centers from which the subjects came were two publically funded centers which serviced persons mainly of the lower socioeconomic status. The first-graders were taken from a public school in the same area as the day care centers. All subjects were from the lower socioeconomic group.

The most important data obtained from the subjects were the drawings. These were obtained by the teachers of the subjects. Other data included background information obtained on the subjects. This included the number of children in the family, the occupation of the head of household, and the name(s) of the parent(s). Information was obtained from personal records kept on the subjects. For the day care center subjects, the teachers were responsible for providing the information. First-graders were given a questionnaire and permission form which was sent to the parents and the information received from them.

Procedure consisted of having the subjects draw a picture of a person they would like to be like and then having them label the drawing according to sex. On the basis of the back-

ground information obtained on the subjects, the drawings were coded as those received from father-absent children and father-present children. Utilizing criteria based on characteristics attributable to femaled (e.g., long hair, dresses or rectangular figure) and males (e.g., shorter hair, pants and facila hair) the drawings were judged to be of one or the other sex. Afterwards, the labels by the subjects were categorized by the father condition of the child and by the sex of the child. Initially, a reliability chech on a random sample of 25 drawings indicated low agreement between the investigator and a psychologist. A reliability coefficient of .77 was obtained using a Pearson's r correlation coefficient.

Statistical analysis included a chi-square 2x2 test of independence done for the hypothesis and each research question. Data were analyzed according to the father condition of the child and the number of same-sex drawings produded. In each analysis, the drawings were tabulated with regard to the number of female and male figures produced. The phi coefficient was used to determined the amount of agreement between the judge and the subject's labels of the drawings. The judgings were done blindly, that is, with no previous information as to the subjects' fa her condition, the child's sex, or the child's label of his drawing.

Results of the chi-square analysis include those received from the judge's labels as well as the subject' labels. This was done relative to an analysis of the second research question which revealed no significant association between the labels of the judge and those of the subjects, $X^2(1)= 3.76$, $p < .05$; $\phi = .31$. With reference to the main hypothesis which stated that there would be a significant association between father condition and sex of drawing, results indicated no significant relationship from the judge's labels. However, a separate analysis by sex revealed no significant association between father condition and sex of drawings for male subjects, while an analysis of female subjects did reveal a significant association in that FF females produced all female drawings and FA females were random in their

productions. The first research question produced no significant findings with the judge's labels while the second question led to an analysis of the subjects' labels. These labels revealed, again, no significant association between father condition and sex of drawings. However, in response to the first research question, there was found a significant relationship between the sex of the child and sex of the drawing (See Table 1). An analysis of the number of same-sex drawings yielded significant association between father condition and the number of same-sex figures produced (See Table 2).

The combined results of this investigation suggest that father condition does affect the number of same-sex figures produced by a group of black children. However, it also appears that father condition does not force father-absent children to develop cross-sex identity or sex-appropriate identity; rather, father-presence makes it possible for male and female children to distinguish parental roles and establish identity with sex-appropriate figures.

The statistical results of this study further suggest that judgings of children's drawings by adults are perhaps invalid and should be accompanied by the child's label of the drawing. In some instances, this label (child's) may be the only one necessary. Also suggested by this investigation was the idea that the age group chosen had not totally developed a clear idea of sex differentiation or perhaps they (subjects) could not reproduce figures whose sex could be clearly identified at this age. Findings concerning the same-sex drawings should prompt further research in this particular area. It has been suggested that most children will produce same-sex drawings when called upon to draw a person.[4] In this study, the father-present subjects complied with this rule while the father-absent children did not. Because of the implication concerning sex-appropriate identification, this occurrence should be further analyzed.

Table 1

Sex of Child and Sex of Drawing as Indicated by the Child's Labelling of the Drawing

	DRAWINGS		
CHILDREN	MALE	FEMALE	
MALE	29	7	36
FEMALE	13	23	36
	42	30	72(TOTAL)

$X^2 = 14.64^*$

$p < .005$

Table 2

Same-sex Drawings as Identified by the Child and Father Condition

	DRAWINGS		
CHILDREN	SAME-SEX	OPPOSITE-SEX	
FATHER-PRESENT	24	1	25
FATHER-ABSENT	28	19	47
	52	20	72(TOTAL)

$X^2 = 10.65^*$

$p < .005$

FOOTNOTES

1 J.A. Clausen, Family Structure, Socialization and Personality. In L.W. Hoffman & M.L. Hoffman (Eds). Review of Child Development Research. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1966.

T.F. Pettigrew, A Profile Of the Negro American. Princeton: Van Nostrand, 1964.

2 W.B. Miller, Lower-class Culture as a Generating Milieu of Gang delinquency. Journal of Social Issues, 1958, 57-61.

D.P. Moynihan, The Negro Family: The Case for National Action. Washington D.C. United States Department of Labor, 1965.

Miller, p.57-61.

3 H.M. Phelan, The Incidence and Possible Significance of the Drawing of Female Figures by Sixth-grade Boys in Response to the Draw-A-Person Test. Psychiatric Quarterly, 1964, p.1-16.

4 V.J. Bieliauskas, Sexual Identification in Children's Drawings of Human Figures. Journal of Clinical Psychology, 1960 p. 42-44.

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